

Physical Activity and Hydration

An effective weight-loss program depends only on cutting calories and also on increasing physical activity. Any type of physical activity you choose to do – whether it is a vigorous activity such as running or aerobic dance or a moderate-intensity activity like walking or mowing the lawn – will increase the number of calories your body uses.

In addition to burning calories, exercise makes other significant contributions to weight-loss efforts. It helps prevent the muscle loss that is likely to occur in a program based solely on calorie reduction. In fact, exercise strengthens and builds muscle mass, which increases the rate at which your body burns calories.

Regular physical activity of at least moderate intensity for 30 to 45 minutes on most and preferably all days of the week is the key to maintaining weight loss. One example of moderate-intensity exercise is brisk walking, at a speed of 3.5 miles per hour. The actual number of calories you burn during exercise depends on several factors, including your weight, the activity you are doing and the intensity at which you are exercising.

Physical activity does not need to be hard to provide some benefit. Participating in moderate-intensity physical activity is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle for people of all ages and abilities. Those who participate in moderate-to-vigorous-intensity activities regularly should be encouraged and supported in their efforts to continue.

Take advantage of any opportunity to increase your physical activity level – like parking several blocks from work, and taking the stairs instead of the elevator. You can even burn calories while doing housework; just mop with all your might and vacuum vigorously.